

Naked eye Delights

A few treats for the naked eye of the sky around us.
At least if one can get away from the daytime smog and night time glare of city lights.

The first is a common 21° Solar Halo, this one nicer than most in that there was some color showing.



These halos are caused by sunlight refracting on tiny ice particles in the upper atmosphere.

A night time close conjunction of a crescent Moon and the planet Venus.
It's always fun to watch for these visually close encounters.



And another close pairing of the two.

This photo doesn't appear to be anything special until one realizes it was during mid day with the sun shining nearby.

This wasn't visible to the naked eye, but I was still able to find the rapidly fading Old Moon in 9X binoculars to compose the photo.



Here is a pairing of the tiny and elusive planet Mercury and the Moon. The opportunities to see this conjunction don't happen often. Mercury is always close to the Sun and doesn't reveal itself to us like this on many occasions.



The Perseid meteor shower in August sometimes treats us to huge numbers of “shooting stars” during its peak. This year was very nice.



Above, a nice Perseid streaks through the sky just below the Pleiades star cluster (the 7 sisters of old mythology) in the constellation Taurus.

Sunrises and Sunsets can be colorful candy for the eye.
In this Sunrise, aerosols from a distant volcanic eruption, lit the morning sky with vivid colors for a brief moment.



Aurora Borealis are best seen from the far north.
These dancing displays of ionized gases high in the upper atmosphere are
among the most awesome things to be seen.
Taken near Kaktovic, Alaska at about 72° North.



The International Space Station passes almost directly overhead of my location in this 60 second exposure.



Finally, a bit of telescopic eye candy.
The star Vega in the constellation Lyra, one of the brighter stars we see from the northern hemisphere.



I hope you enjoyed the trip.